AN AMERICAN DESERT.

BY ANNIE WESTERN WHITNEY.

Life on the great desert of Sahara would seem to the world at large an impossibility. With its vast extent of sand and its lack of water, except in spots where nature has generously provided rest and refreshment for man and beast, the thought of anything like home life would seem an absurdity. In our own United States, however, there are deserts naturally as barren as Sahara, and on them live people whose lives, to those who love the trees, the birds, and the flowers, would seem the essence of desolation. These deserts are in Nevada, Utah, Arizona, Wyoming, and California, and on some of them no trees, grass or weeds grow naturally, while what water is found on them in spots is so salty as to be unfit for man or beast.

The State of Nevada, whose whole population is only forty thousand—hardly enough to make a good-sized city—is practically one vast desert. Its lack of verdure and of water has always made it a dangerous State for emigrants to pass through. At times ranchmen and cattlemen have undertaken to drive their cattle across the State but in the majority of cases the experiment has proved disastrous. There is a record of an attempt some years ago, by experienced shepherds, to take eighteen thousand sheep from California to Wyoming. While passing through Nevada eight thousand sheep died in five days for want of water, while the men themselves were only saved from terrible suffering by finding pools too small to supply the sheep.

But the great iron horse has found his way across the State, and now travelers complain of the "alkaline plains," whose dust sifts through the double windows of the trains and irritates their throats as they fly across the State as fast as steam can carry them. Few of these travelers realize the desolate lives of those living in the tiny settlements they pass, nor do they know that before and behind them are "water trains" bringing from a distance the only drinking water these people have, as well as water for the very engines that carry them along.

And little, in turn, do the people living on this desert know of the lives of those passing in these same trains. A bright little fellow recently informed a stranger that his mother had taken him away on a train, "and," he said, with all the delight a child takes in telling of something wonderful, "I saw a tree!"

Think of a boy with his eyesight, living in the heart of our United States, who had never seen a tree! Yet many of the children living on this great desert have never seen a blade of grass, and have never eaten a fresh vegetable, except such as can be brought from a distance; while horses, cows, sheep, and even cats and dogs would be curiosities to them. They know nothing of the delight to be derived from a flower or vegetable garden, nor do they know anything of life in the woods, or of how the singing birds build their nests among the trees and care for their young. And it is not the children alone who have not seen these things, but often their mothers and fathers as well.

Into one of these settlements, where there are five families and eight children, a young girl has recently gone to teach. The country around her is level, there are no trees, no grass, nothing green, for the ground is covered with a white deposit of alkali which is death to plant life. There are no roads, for there are no neighbors; and no horses, for there is no place for them to go, no work for them to do, and nothing for them to live on. The railroad on each side of the station is straight as far as the eye can see, but no "next station" can be seen, for it takes an express train an hour to go from one station to another. How strange a life this young teacher's will be. How many beautiful stories she will have to tell these children of the everyday life elsewhere that will seem to them like wonderful fairy tales, yet are true, for she has seen and lived in them.

This great desert is not all one vast plain. There are mountains and valleys, but they are bare and desolate. A kind of sage-bush and a low, short grass, which grows only in the spring, are to be found, and on these a few cattle can be pastured, but forty acres are required for pasturing each cow. Where streams of fresh water are to be found or where wells can be dug, the hand of man, through irrigation, has caused oases to be formed; and trees have been planted, crops grown, farms formed. Those seen by the traveler from the car windows are beautiful to look upon, while others, to those accustomed to "rapid transit," would be pronounced "inaccessible."

"I would like," said a gentleman recently to one of these farmers, "to visit your place."

"I would be very glad to have you," was the reply, "but you won't come." Then he explained that in order to reach there he must first cross the State—a trip of twenty-four hours by rail—and then must go over into Utah, and, returning into the State by a more northern road, must take a two hundred mile stage drive.

"After that," said the farmer, "you can drive to my place."

In 1861 gold was discovered in the eastern part of the State, and the famous Comstock gold mines were opened. The mining town of Virginia City, with its own water works, was the result of this. Other gold and silver mines were opened, towns sprang up, and in some cases substantial cities were built. Ardent citizens predicted a great and growing prosperity for the State. But, alas for these hopes! the price of silver went down, the grade of ore in many mines proved too low to be profitably worked, and ere long, baffled in the struggle with fortune, men abandoned whole towns and cities to the owls and prairie dogs and coyotes. Naturally, since the desert opened no other opportunities for profitable labor to the disappointed miners, this has affected the population of the whole State. Therefore we have in Nevada the anomalous condition of one State in the Union that is decreasing instead of increasing in population.

TRAINING RAW RECRUITS.

How the Newcomers will be Drilled for the Army.

One of the most interesting features of the camp life of the various stations of the United States regular and volunteer armies is the training of the raw recruit. In all the camps there are at least two drills a day for the recruits, in which they are taught the use of arms. There are many other things for the recruit to learn, and a description of what is expected of him, as told by Capt. John Conlin, who has charge of the recruiting work at Chickamauga, will be interesting.

"In the training of a volunteer for service in the American army," says the captain, "he should have at least from three to six weeks of practice—the longer the better—in order to familiarize him with his duties; and he should be as nearly perfect, physically, as it is possible for him to be. If he is a man of good habits and regulates his life aright, the better for him and the service, as both in marches and in engagements he will be subjected to fatigue and other hardships, which fall least heavily on the soldier of correct habits and good physique.

"The few weeks necessary for instruction before proceeding to the front may appear as being too short a time for the serious work of armed conflict, but it will be remembered by many that whole regiments, officers included, went into the civil war with little more than the most rudimentary knowledge of arms. The men received their training on the march and in front of the enemy. Many of them had no taste for military life, they cared nothing for martial glory, yet these raw regiments were speedily molded into well-disciplined and effective battalions.

If a move is not made on Cuba at once there will be ample time to teach the men. In the various camps of State militia instruction should be carried on daily. Recruits should first be formed in squads of from six to twelve, and instructed by a competent non-commissioned officer in setting up exercise and facings, the length and cadence of the step. They should also be taught the position of the soldier, that is, standing in an erect position. When they are considered sufficiently instructed in these preliminaries they should be next given arms and equipment, and taught the manuel of arms, loadings and firings; that is, put through the various positions merely. Then follow squad company and battalion drill, and how to perform guard duty by day and night.

"The guard remains on for twenty-four hours, when the relief takes its place. Ordinarily the soldier is on duty two and off four hours. The recruits are taught how to walk the post and challenging. The duty of the sentinel on post is to observe closely, using his eyes and ears to the best advantage. He must promptly report any violation of the regulations or orders received when he goes on post, and, in addition, anything which excites his suspicion. He reports to the corporal on duty.

"The recruits are taught how to pitch and strike tents, and how to keep camp properly policed, and in a sanitary condition by observing all the rules of cleanliness possible. They are taught how to pack their knapsacks and how to care for their rifles.

"Regarding drilling, the general exercise includes these steps: Squad drill, without arms; company drill, with arms; battallion and regimental evolutions, and in case of three or four regiments being in the camp of instruction, brigade drill is included.

"There are usually a good many roll calls, especially when the soldier is undergoing instruction. There are the reveille, fatigue or policing camp, breakfast, guard mount, drill call, recall from drill, parade, supper, retreat, tattoo and taps—lights out. Short marches should be included in a camp of instruction, gradually increasing in length until the men become hardened to the service.

"A recruit should be taught not to carry any more weight than the Government imposes in the way of equipment. It is very important that he should know what to carry. He should restrict his belongings to absolute necessity.

"In camp the drill should be not less than an hour and a quarter, and of not more than an hour and a half duration. If they are prolonged beyond that time the men lose attention and the instruction ceases to be of value.

"As to the use of ammunition in battle recruits should be taught to be careful not to waste any of it, and not to fire unless there is something to fire at, unless, of course, they are ordered to do so by the commanding or company officers. At the present time arms are so well and accurately constructed that a thorough knowledge of them, of their powers and capabilities, is essential to success. Recruits should receive accurate instruction in the method of becoming good shots, in theory at least, if not in practice. They should know how to handle their weapons and possess the knowledge that makes skilled marksmen. They should be theoretically instructed how to become good marksmen, as the deadly range of small arms runs up to 3,200 yards, and in the hands of skilled marksmen, a Springfield or other good rifle is a very deadly weapon as far as the enemy can be seen.

"The duties of a soldier in actual warfare are trying even under the most favorable conditions. It is, therefore, absolutely necessary that he should be physically as near perfect as attainable. He is obliged to endure long, fatiguing marches without food, rest or water, sometimes under a boiling sun at that. Again, he will sometimes be compelled to march in the rain, through mud, and ford rivers that will take him up to the waist. The conditions in Cuba, during the season of the year when our men could go down there with comparative safety, may be different, but rest assured of this: There is no romance in war and the recruit should make up his mind to anything in the way of hardship when he offers himself for service in war.—*Philadelphia Times.*

— Scarlet flowers are said to stand drouth better than any others.

— The man who doesn't shovel the dirt is always willing to give advice.

— No man knows just what he can do till he tries.

— A man who is true to himself is a friend to everybody.

— The curvature of the earth is eight inches per mile.

— How much pain the evils that never happened have cost us.

— There is great ability in knowing how to conceal one's ability.

— If you want to find out how great a man is, let him tell it himself.

— The greatest cataract and the highest trees in the world are American.

— The mines of the world produce every year 540,000,000 tons of ore and coal.

— The heart beats ten strokes a minute less when one is lying down than when in an upright position.

— It will probably be a case of Greek meeting Greek when the cowboys meet the bullfighters.

— If a man knew as much about himself as he does about his neighbor, he would never speak to himself.

— The mind tolerate on long vacations; the busy brain not only does the most things but the best things.

— It many times falls out that we deem ourselves much deceived in others, because we first deceive ourselves.

— "Work, but don't worry," the old saw says; but some people don't work, so they take it out in worrying.

— The Pacific ocean covers 78,000,000 square miles; the Atlantic 25,000,000; and the Mediterranean sea 1,000,000.

— An old lady being asked to subscribe to a newspaper, declined on the ground that when she wanted the news she manufactured it.

— It is vain to hope to please all alike. Let a man stand with his back in what direction he will, he must necessarily turn his back upon half the world.

— A woman may not be able to sharpen a pencil or hold an umbrella, but she can pack more articles into a trunk than a man can in a one-horse wagon.

— The longest canal in the world is in Russia. It extends from St. Petersburg to the frontier of China and measures nearly 4,500 miles.

— A novel sort of window glass has been invented. Persons on the inside of the house can see through it, but it is opaque to those on the outside.

— "What are you going to be when you grow up, Tommy?" asked the visitor. "I think," said Tommy, thoughtfully, "that I shall be somebody's ancestor."

THE RETIRED BURGLAR.

A Very Lively Experience Following a Visit to a Farmhouse.

"As a general thing," said the retired burglar, "I stuck close to my legitimate line of work and never took anything but what I could carry off myself and dispose of easily, but occasionally when I was hard pressed I would take bulky things and do the best I could with them. But it never paid, and something happened once that made me give up that sort of thing for good.

"A farmhouse that I was looking over one night had nobody in it, not a soul. They hadn't gone for long; that was plain enough. Everything was left just as it was. They'd just gone off for the night somewhere, maybe to a party or something of that sort, but they was just as far away now as they'd been in China, and I might have carried the house off and they not know it, and that's what I did pretty near.

"There was scarcely any small stuff worth carrying off, and after I'd looked around a little I thought I might as well take a load. I could dispose of it for something. I got together in the hall a wagon load of stuff, trunks and one thing and another, all ready to load. I had been around to the barn previously to see if there was a horse left, because I didn't know but what they might have taken the only one, but there was a horse there. He was a big, solid looking horse, nothing particular about him one way or the other, except he looked like a strong horse that could pull almost anything. I got the harness on him and hooked him into a farm wagon and got him around to the side of the house. I suppose I might just as well have taken him to the front, but there was no use of being reckless about it.

"Well, I loaded the wagon with the trunks and things till I'd got a pretty fair load, about all I thought I could carry and make time with, and then I started, and we jogged along the road comfortable as could be for a quarter of a mile or so, when there was a squirrel or a chipmunk or something run across the road, and I'm blessed if it didn't scare the old horse, and in about a second and a quarter he was running away. And I sat there, hanging on to the reins and yanking and sawing and trying to hold him up and having just about as much effect on him as though I'd been a baby.

"About a quarter of a mile farther on—I knew it because I had come that way—there was a bridge over a brook that ran across the road, just a common little bridge with barked poles on each side for a railing. There was a road on one side of the bridge, too, through the water. There was a house just the other side of this brook, and I was afraid if the old horse went across the bridge hammering in that still night he'd wake up the folks and rouse the neighborhood maybe, so I tried to steer him off through the brook. I thought he'd make less noise going through the water, and I thought maybe the cold water would sober him, too, and make him stop, and I got a twist on the reins and a brace on the dashboard and pulled, and I did get him turned off a little at the fork toward the brook, and I thought I had got him started for it all right, but he sheered again for the bridge, and I couldn't begin to stop him.

"The bridge railings were supported in crotched sticks, and from these railings there were poles along the little approach on each side of the bridge, the ends of these poles being in lower crotched sticks. When the old horse sheered back from the ford road to the bridge road, he got the approach to the bridge all right himself, but he swung the wagon just enough to throw the hind axle over the end of the pole protecting the approach, and it jammed in some way between the pole and the crotched stick supporting it and busted the reach of the wagon and tore off the hind axle and wheels before you could think, and the old horse went pounding across the bridge and half a mile farther yet with the tail end of the wagon trailing on the ground and scattering trunks and comfortables and I don't know what not all along the road. When I finally got him held up, I was sitting in an empty wagon with the dashboard up in the air and the floor sloping down to the ground.

"I might have got another wagon and gone back and gathered up the goods, but there was too much risk in that. Maybe I could have taken the horse along and got something for him, but I might have been taken up for horse stealing, and I didn't fancy that, so I just turned the old horse round and started him for home and then I started myself, and that's the last try I made on bulk goods."—New York Sun.

Bad Village Sanitation.

Village houses are always poor sanitary structures. The cellars and foundations are improperly constructed, and as a result ground air permeates the whole dwelling, especially in winter. A dampproof course in the walls and a cellar floor of concrete and asphalt would be considered a luxury rather than a necessity in the country. Another point about cellars is the fact that they are frequently the receptacle for decomposing potatoes and other vegetables, a fact which certainly does not add to the healthfulness of the house.

In the winter the heating and ventilation are very poor because almost all village houses are stove heated, and for a house to be effectually heated by stoves there must be a series of fresh air inlets and foul air outlets suitably arranged, and these do not exist in village dwellings.

Outside the house the first thing that strikes the sanitarian is the garden, filled perhaps with decaying cabbage, kitchen refuse and the like. It is needless to state that a lawn is the best thing to have about a dwelling. If there is a garden, it must be cultivated thoroughly, or it will be worse than none at all. Decaying vegetables—in fact, all putrescible refuse—should be buried.—Sanitarian.

An Awkward Predicament.

Professor Max Muller in Cosmopolis recalls the story of what happened once in the coinrooms of the British museum, where, during a visit of a number of gentlemen and ladies, it was observed that a very valuable and almost unique Sicilian coin had disappeared. All the gentlemen present in the room at the time had to be searched, and no one objected except one. He protested his innocence, but declared that nothing would induce him to allow his pockets to be searched. All the other visitors were allowed to go home, but he was detained while the coinroom was swept and every corner searched once more. At last the missing coin was found in a chink of the floor.

Every apology was made to the suspected person, but he was asked why he had so strongly objected to being searched. He then produced from his pocket another specimen of the very same coin. "I came here," he said, "to compare my specimen, which is very perfect, with the only other specimen which is thought to be superior to mine and almost unique in the world. Now, suppose," he added, "that you had not found your coin and had found my specimen in my pocket. Would anybody have believed in my innocence?"

The Organ Player In Hamburg.

In true organ playing the music is like a current, which in crescendo movements is increased, not by streams that dart in visibly with sudden accretions from the side, but by unseen springs of sound which well up from underneath, swelling the volume you know not how. Our organist was evidently extemporizing and for his own enjoyment. I do not think that he was conscious he had an auditor. But in his extemporizing he wove in snatches of familiar strains, especially one splendid German choral.

Presently the sacristan called across the church to his assistant, "Who is it playing, M—— or K——?" "K——," replied the assistant. Then the sacristan called out to him. The music stopped, and the organist, getting down from his seat, appeared from behind the keyboard, which had hidden him from view. And, behold, a workingman in his blouse! It was, if you please, a German mechanic, the tuner, and he had been giving us such an improvisation as I have not often heard in either England or America.—Outlook.

— In Germany one man in 213 goes to college; in Scotland one in 520; in the United States one in 2,000, and in England one in 5,000.

NOTICE.

SOUTHERN RAILWAY.

Condensed Schedule in Effect May 1, 1898.

STATIONS.	Daily No. 11.
Lv. Charleston	7 10 a m
Lv. Columbia	11 00 a m
" Prosperity	12 11 p m
" Newberry	12 22 p m
" Ninety-Six	1 25 p m
Ar. Greenwood	1 45 p m
" Hodges	2 25 p m
Ar. Abbeville	2 55 p m
Ar. Belton	3 10 p m
Ar. Anderson	3 35 p m
Ar. Greenville	4 35 p m
Ar. Atlanta	9 25 p m

STATIONS.	Daily No. 12.
Lv. Greenville	10 15 a m
" Piedmont	10 40 a m
" Williamston	10 55 a m
Lv. Anderson	10 50 a m
Lv. Belton	11 15 a m
Ar. Donnalds	11 39 a m
Lv. Abbeville	11 20 a m
Lv. Hodges	11 55 a m
" Greenwood	12 35 p m
" Ninety-Six	12 54 p m
" Newberry	2 04 p m
" Prosperity	2 18 p m
Ar. Columbia	3 05 p m
Ar. Charleston	8 00 p m

Daily No. 9	Daily No. 13	STATIONS.	Daily No. 14	Daily No. 10
3 50p	7 10a	Lv....Charleston....Ar	8 00p	11 00a
8 20a	11 30a	" ....Columbia.... "	2 25p	9 30p
9 07a	12 15p	" ....Alston.... "	2 40p	8 50a
10 04a	1 25p	" ....Santuc.... "	1 25p	7 46p
10 33a	2 00p	" ....Union.... "	1 05p	7 00p
10 55a	2 22p	" ....Jonesville.... "	12 39p	6 38p
11 15a	2 37p	" ....Pacolet.... "	12 14p	6 42p
11 35a	3 10p	Ar...Spartanburg...Lv	11 45a	6 15p
11 40a	3 20p	Lv...Spartanburg...Ar	11 30a	6 00p
2 45p	7 00p	Ar....Asheville....Lv	8 30a	3 05p

"P." p. m. "A." a. m.

Trains 9 and 10 carry elegant Pullman sleeping cars between Columbia and Asheville, enroute daily between Jacksonville and Cincinnati.

Trains leave Spartanburg, A. & C. division, northbound, 6:37 a. m., 2:37 p. m., 6:10 p. m., (Vestibule Limited); southbound 12:20 a. m., 3:15 p. m., 11:34 a. m., (Vestibule Limited).

Trains leave Greenville, A. and C. division, northbound, 5:45 a. m., 3:34 p. m. and 5:20 p. m., (Vestibuled Limited); southbound, 1:25 a. m., 4:30 p. m., 12:20 p. m. (Vestibuled Limited).

Pullman Service.

Pullman palace sleeping cars on Trains 35 and 36, 37 and 38, on A. and C. division.

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